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SUBJECT: RUSSIA, GEORGIA, GERMANY, LITHUANIA AND THE EU:
THREATS AND RESPONSES

REF: A. GILCHRIST - LEADER EMAIL 8/26/08

[1](#)B. STATE 91894

Classified By: Ambassador John A. Cloud for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Russian Ambassador told the GOL August 27 that it would pay a price, including being subject to "not ordinary measures," for its outspoken support for Georgia, according to Lithuanian MFA U/S Zygimantas Pavilionis. He also reported that FRG Chancellor Merkel, in her visit to Lithuania the day before, suggested the EU host a summit in Tbilisi for countries on Russia's borders as a sign of solidarity; Pavilionis urged that VP Cheney attend if it coincides with his visit to the region. Merkel told the Lithuanians Russia still seeks to achieve three goals: depose President Saakashvili, both split the EU and divide it from the U.S. over Georgia, and undermine Ukraine. She said the details of Georgian support, including MAP, still needed to be weighed, but she was forward leaning. Russia, she said, "had destroyed all the confidence it had built up in the past twenty years." Pavilionis shared Lithuanian thinking on possible EU responses to Russia, including freezing many aspects of EU cooperation, targeting individuals through bank account freezes, targeted visa bans on the Belarus model, and other points of pressure. He concluded that Lithuania feels threatened and asked us to consider political-military consultations (bilaterally or with the other Baltics), revising NATO threat assessments, and U.S. support for NATO contingency planning. End Summary.

RUSSIA: YOU WILL PAY A PRICE

[1](#)2. (C) Russian Ambassador to Lithuania Chkhikvadze demarched Lithuanian FM Petras Vaitiekunas at 8 a.m. August 27 to inform him that Lithuania will suffer "consequences" for its support for Georgia. U/S Pavilionis, who also attended the meeting, told DCM that Chkhikvadze said Russia is aware of how active Lithuania has been in support of Georgia, but should know that "Saakashvili's days are numbered," that Russia will take "not ordinary measures" against Lithuania, and it will have to pay for its behavior. He did not elaborate what the measures might be. Pavilionis called it an outrageous performance.

[1](#)3. (C) Pavilionis said that, in light of these Russian threats, Lithuania is looking for visible signs of support from NATO and the U.S. DCM outlined recent public shows of support, including the SOCOM visit August 20, the USS Elrod visit August 24-27, and prospectively the USAFE commander's September visit, the Presidential meeting September 29, and the U.S. rotation of NATO air policing mission starting in October, for which we hope to have a senior USG visitor. Pavilionis said Lithuania sincerely appreciates all that the U.S. is doing, but said it is now looking for NATO military contingency planning as well, and encouraged more senior U.S. visitors to Lithuania.

14. (C) Pavilionis also described Chancellor Merkel's meetings the evening before with President Adamkus and other GOL officials. She told Adamkus she hoped to convince President Sarkozy to organize (in addition to the September 1 Paris summit) a meeting in Tbilisi for EU states and other regional states who may be threatened by Russia. She further asked President Adamkus to lobby Sarkozy to support such a meeting. Pavilionis said he hoped that, if scheduling would allow it, VP Cheney would attend as well to show a united U.S.-EU front in the most visible way possible.

15. (C) Merkel told Adamkus that Russia has three remaining goals. The first is to get rid of Saakashvili, which means that the West has to show solidarity with him "even if we don't like him." A joint Sarkozy-Cheney visit to Tbilisi would help do that. Second, Russia wants to divide the west as much as possible, which makes both EU unity and U.S.-EU coordination key. She said that the weak links in the EU are Italy and Spain. Third, she said Russia wants to destabilize Ukraine, so we have to think how we can convince Russia that would be a mistake. Merkel said the West needs to consider how we do that, and whether MAP is part of that (while being frank that her coalition situation limited her ability to act in the face of FM Steinmeir's opposition). Merkel concluded that Russia had destroyed all the confidence that it had built up in the West over the past twenty years.

16. (C) Merkel and Adamkus also agreed that something has

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happened internally in Moscow that caused a shift in the forces of power. Medvedev is clearly weakened, they thought, and this may possibly lead to Putin retaking the presidency.

Lithuanian Menu of Responses to Russia

17. (C) Pavilionis said that Lithuania at the September 1 EU summit would, as suggested by Department (refs A and B), support an EU mission to complement the OSCE monitoring mission, and be willing to contribute to both. He also described some of the ideas being discussed within the GOL as possible responses to Russian actions, which the GOL will float within the EU. The menu is not agreed but ideas include, at one end, freezing ministerial participation in the G8; suspending the PCA negotiations or, at the Avignon Gymnich, supporting a Swedish proposal to examine in detail the existing PCA and stop specific aspects of EU-Russian cooperation, such as access to scientific or technical cooperation, and dropping any mention of "strategic partnership"; targeting individuals involved in the invasion, including freezing bank accounts and a visa ban list; freezing Russia's COE membership (for which there is presumably a Greek precedent); changing the visa regime for access to the Schengen area; or even more radical ideas like military exercises in Georgia.

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